Provision of helicopters for security forces

*34. SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that various State Governments have requested that helicopters be provided to security forces in the naxalite and terrorist affected areas; and

(b) if so, what decision Government have taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) and (b) No such proposal has been received from the State Governments. However, the States of Bihar and Chhattisgarh had included procurement of helicopters in their proposals under the scheme for modernization of the State police forces in the years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002. However, these proposals were not agreed to by the Central Government.

Purchase of AJT

*35. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) present status of purchase of Advanced Jet Trainers (AJT);

(b) whether it is a fact that there has been delay in the price negotiation; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Government have decided to induct 66 Hawk Advanced Jet Trainers (AJTS) of M/s BAE Systems, UK, for the Indian Air Force. Out of these 66 AJTs, 24 will be procured from M/s BAE Systems of UK in flyaway condition. The remaining 42 AJTs will be licensed manufactured in India by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.

(b) and (c) Price negotiation with M/s BAE Systems has since been completed

Conference of the Inter-State Council at Srinagar

*36. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA:

SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a conference of the Inter-State Council was held in Srinagar a few months back;

(b) if so, whether the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh made a suggestion for the amendment of Article 365 of the Constitution which was supported by the majority of Chief Ministers;

(c) if so, the details thereof including other matters considered and decisions taken therein; and

(d) whether any follow-up action has been taken with regard thereto and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SWAMI CHINMAYANAND): (a) to (c)The eighth meeting of the Inter-State Council was held on 27-28 August, 2003 in Srinagar. Issues relating to 'Administrative Relations', 'Emergency Provisions', 'Deployment of Union Armed Forces', 'Contract labour/Contract appointments', 'Good Governance' and implementation report on decisions taken by Inter-State Council on the recommendations of Sarkaria Commission were discussed. The recommendations accepted in the Inter-State Council meeting are as follows:

(1) Administrative Relations

The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh proposed amendment to Article 365 to include a provision for prior consultation in the Inter-State Council before issues of sanction, in the event of non-compliance of directions under Articles 256 and 257. However, the Inter-State Council approved the recommendation of Sarkaria Commission for a cautious approach before giving directions under Articles 256 and 257 and application of Article 365 of the Constitution. No constitutional amendment was recommended by the Inter-State Council in Article 365.

(2) Emergency Provisions

(i) Article 356 should be used most sparingly, as a measure of last resort.

(ii) Safeguards provided in the Supreme Court judgement in the Bommai case may be suitably incorporated in the Constitution.

(3) Deployment of Union Armed Forces

State Governments should be consulted wherever feasible even though it is not obligatory, before the Union Government deploys its armed forces in a State.

(4) Contract labour/Contract appointments

(i) The Council noted that the Draft Bill to amend Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 would be finalised by the Union Ministry of Labour in consultation with the Ministry of Law & Justice for taking further necessary action.

(ii) An Inter-Ministerial Standing Committee would be established for the present to clear expeditiously the amendments to be proposed by the State Governments in various labour laws.

(5) Implementation Report

The I nter-State Council took note that out of 247 recommendations of Sarkaria Commission, it had taken a decision on 230 recommendations upto the seventh meeting. Of these, 170 had been implemented, 7 were at various stages of implementation and 53 had not been found acceptable by the Council and the Administrative Ministries/Departments.

(6) Good Governance

A Sub-committee of the Council would be appointed to further deliberate on the subject of Good Governance and come out with a blue print on the subject to be discussed in the next meeting of the Council.

(d) The Inter-State Council is a recommendatory body. The Government of India has accepted the recommendation of the Inter-State Council that a cautious approach should be adopted by the Union Government before giving directions under Articles 256 and 257 and application of Article 365 of the Constitution. The inter-State Council Secretariat has sent all the other recommendations to the concerned Ministries/Departments for follow up action. This is monitored by the Inter-State Council Secretariat on a continuous basis.

Task force on power sector investments and reforms

*37. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether in a bid to attract investments in the power sector and turn the enabling provisions of the new Electricity Act into investment opportunities, the Government has decided to constitute a Task Force on power sector investments and reforms;